

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRESS CONFERENCE BY PRESIDENT FORD ON CUBA

FOLLOWING IS EXCERPTED FROM PRESIDENT FORD'S PRESS
CONFERENCE OF DECEMBER 18, 1975, CONCERNING CUBAN INVOLVE-
MENT IN ANGOLA:

Q: MR. PRESIDENT, NOW THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS PERSISTING
DESPITE WHAT THE CONGRESS DID ON OUR SIDE IN POURING
EQUIPMENT AND MATERIAL INTO ANGOLA, DO YOU SEE NOW THE
POSSIBILITY THAT THIS MIGHT SERIOUSLY HARM ANY CHANGE FOR
A COMPLETION OF SALT 2?

A: THE PRESIDENT: THE PERSISTENCE OF THE SOVIET UNION IN
ANGOLA WITH A HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS OR MORE WORTH OF
MILITARY AID CERTAINLY DOES NOT HELP THE CONTINUATION OF
DETENTE. NOW I WILL ADD ANOTHER COMMENT. AS I SAID
EARLIER, THERE ARE BETWEEN 4,000 AND 6,000 CUBAN COMBAT
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MILITARY PERSONNEL IN ANGOLA. THE ACTION OF THE CUBAN

GOVERNMENT IN SENDING COMBAT FORCES TO ANGOLA DESTROYS ANY OPPORTUNITY FOR IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. THEY HAVE MADE A CHOICE IN EFFECT AND I MEAN IT VERY LITERALLY HAS PRECLUDED ANY IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS WITH CUBA.

Q: MR. PRESIDENT, A COUPLE MONTHS AGO THERE WERE SOME EFFORTS BY THE ADMINISTRATION TO TRY AND WARM RELATIONS WITH CUBA; DR. KISSINGER MADE SOME STATEMENTS, I BELIEVE. IT IS APPARENT NOW THAT AT THAT VERY TIME THE CUBANS HAD TO BE GEARING UP OR KNEW THEY WOULD PROBABLY SEND TROOPS TO ANGOLA. DID OUR INTELLIGENCE PICK UP THIS FACT? WERE WE IN FACT TRYING TO PERSUADE THEM NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN ANGOLA AND WERE WE OFFERING FRIENDSHIP TO THEM IN RETURN FOR THEIR NOT PARTICIPATING?

A: THE PRESIDENT: THE SENDING OF MILITARY PERSONNEL VIA CUBA TO ANGOLA IS A RATHER RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN ANY MAGNITUDE. THE STATEMENTS MADE BY THE SECRETARY INDICATING THAT THERE WAS A SOFTENING, A CHANGE ON THE PART OF CUBA, IT WOULD BE RECIPROCATED BY US, WAS MADE BEFORE THERE WAS ANY SIGNIFICANT MILITARY INVOLVEMENT BY CUBA IN ANGOLA. I WANTED TO BE ON THE RECORD, AND AS FORCEFUL AS I CAN SAY THE ACTION OF THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT IN THE EFFORT THAT THEY MADE TO GET PUERTO RICO FREE AND CLEAR FROM THE UNITED STATES AND THE ACTION OF THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT TO INVOLVE ITSELF IN A MASSIVE MILITARY WAY IN ANGOLA WITH COMBAT TROOPS ENDS AS FAR AS I AM CONCERNED ANY EFFORTS AT ALL TO HAVE FRIENDLIER RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF CUBA. KISSINGER

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